

CHAPTER VI TRADE,  
COMMEECE, AND INDUSTRY

UNLIKE the origin of the vast multiplicity of customs prevailing among people of different races—customs, with whatever local variations of form, essentially identical in nature—there is no mystery concerning the origin of trade. Its necessity lies in the material needs of men, and the fact that no set of men possess all the commodities which minister to those needs. Hence, the only mode in early times—apart from robbery or fraud—in which this exchange of the superfluous for the necessary could be arranged, may be thus described: A man possesses a certain kind of article which he does not wish to keep, or of which he possesses more than sufficient for his wants, and is therefore willing to part with a portion; and desires another kind of article which he does not possess, or of which he does not possess enough: another person happens to possess more than he requires of the article which the former desires, and is therefore prepared to dispose of some of it; and wishes in his turn to secure a supply, or a greater supply (if he already holds a stock), of the article which the former is ready to give up. The two must then in some way be brought together, and the exchange of articles be made. In simple and obvious cases—that, for example, of the fisherman with his spoil of fish, and the hunter with his gain of game—the process of exchange would be a ready one (as regards the articles themselves apart from their equivalence in value), but it is not difficult to imagine, in other less simple instances, what search and trouble would require to be expended (and often fruitlessly expended) before the two persons discovered each other, with the want on each side which the superfluity on the other side could alone supply.